

**To:** Miller, Johanna[Miller.Johanna@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]; Lemon, Mollie[Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov]; McKean, Deborah[mckean.deborah@epa.gov]  
**From:** Smith, Paula  
**Sent:** Thur 4/14/2016 9:55:40 PM  
**Subject:** FW: URGENT: ACTION: Daily Caller; Bonita Peak Mining District HRS; DEADLINE 6 EST

Johanna-Urgent questions from an HQ area reporter with urgent deadline. Here's what we've got so far from Rob. Deb working on #2 and 3. Can you look at #1 to see if there's anything you would add?

**From:** Ethan Barton [<mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 14, 2016 2:25 PM  
**To:** Press <[Press@epa.gov](mailto:Press@epa.gov)>; Lemon, Mollie <[Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov](mailto:Lemon.Mollie@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Bonita Peak Mining District HRS

Here's the link to the HRS document, for your convenience:

<https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1769520.pdf>

On Thu, Apr 14, 2016 at 2:24 PM, Ethan Barton <[ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)> wrote:

Hello,

I have some questions regarding the Bonita Peak Mining District HRS Documentation Record.

I would like to know why the drinking water threat was not scored. The document shows that ground water migration pathway was not scored because of the low population density and because there are "no municipal wells located within the four mile radius that serve as potable supplies."

However, Silverton, Colorado, Farmington, New Mexico, and the Navajo Nation have all had their water supplies affected by the Gold King Mine release, which suggests water supplies are, in fact, impacted by the Bonita Peak Mining District.

Additionally, both the human food chain and the environmental threats scored the max values. How is it that the EPA claims the river is safe for humans and that drinking water is not affected, yet the human food chain is heavily threatened?

Given the threat to the human food chain, have residents who live in the area who consume wildlife, such as fishers in Silverton, Colorado, been warned of this threat and been given guidance?

In sum:

1. Why was drinking water not assessed in the HRS, given the details provided?- Site assessment group

The Hazard Ranking System is not a risk assessment. It is a numerical screening model, prescribed by regulation, used to determine eligibility for the NPL. Using the HRS, EPA assigns certain points for various types of receptors actually or potentially impacted by hazardous substances for each evaluated pathway. For the Bonita Peak site, EPA evaluated the surface water pathway and, using the HRS, documented that the site was eligible to be included on the NPL based on the presence of fisheries and a threatened species relative to the observed releases of hazardous substances at the site. A drinking water assessment was not necessary to document that the site was eligible for the NPL.

2. How can the human food chain be so heavily threatened, but the drinking water, as well as the Animas River, is safe for humans?

EPA is aware that hazardous constituents have been and continue to release to fisheries within the watershed, but it is unknown at this point the risks to the human food chain. Additional data collection is required before risks to the human food chain are understood.

3. Has the EPA warned local residents and provided guidance on the threat to the human food chain?

My deadline is end of business today.

Thanks,

Ethan

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